

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: VENICE BIENNALE

REF: ROME 18851, 18852

1. USG POSITION HAS BEEN AND REMAINS THAT IT DOES NOT OFFICIALLY PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITIONS, BUT THAT IT WILL ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS TO DO SO.

2. ON JANUARY 5 INAUGURAL MEETING HELD OF AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS, A PRIVATE BODY ORGANIZED TO CONSIDER SUCH MATTERS. THE COMMITTEE INCLUDES TOP REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MUSEUM PROFESSION FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY (SUCH AS THOMAS MESSER, CHAIRMAN; THOMAS HOVING, RICHARD OLDENBURG, JOSHUA TAYLOR), SCHOLARS AND ARTS PATRONS (SUCH AS CHARLES FRANKEL, FRANK STANTON), ARTISTS (SUCH AS GEORGE SEGAL) AND REPRESENTATIVES OF USIA (ASST. DIRECTOR-ICS SCHNEIDMAN) AND STATE (ADVISOR ON THE ARTS SOLMSEN).

3. AT THIS OPENING MEETING, VENICE BIENNALE DISCUSSED AT UNCLASSIFIED

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CONSIDERABLE LENGTH. MEMBERS FELT THAT U.S. PARTICIPATION

VERY IMPORTANT, BUT THAT SHORTNESS OF TIME UNTIL OPENING PRESENTS FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE TO ORGANIZATION OF APPROPRIATE SHOW AND RAISING OF NECESSARY FUNDS.

4. THE COMMITTEE DETERMINED THAT FOR BOTH PRACTICAL REASONS AND AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, RESTORATION AND GUARDING OF U.S. PAVILION SHOULD BE RESPONSIBILITY OF BIENNALE AUTHORITIES, NOTING THAT AT OTHER INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS (E.G. SAO PAULO) SPACE IS MAINTAINED AND GUARDED BY HOST COUNTRY.

5. COMMITTEE ADOPTED FORMAL RESOLUTION THAT IF, AND ONLY IF, BIENNALE AUTHORITIES WILL GIVE WRITTEN ASSURANCE TO EMBASSY BY JANUARY 16 THAT THEY WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESTORATION OF PAVILION AND GUARDING THROUGHOUT SHOW (BOTH TO ACCEPTABLE PROFESSIONAL STANDARD), COMMITTEE WILL BEND EVERY EFFORT TO MOUNT FIRST CLASS U.S. ENTRY. MOMA DIRECTOR OLDENBURG INDICATED HE MORE THAN READY TO CEDE TITLE OF PAVILION TO BIENNALE IF THAT FACILITATES THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAINTAIN IT. (FYI - THIS MOVE WOULD PROBABLY BE UNPOPULAR WITH SOME OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN TITLE TO THEIR PAVILIONS - END FYI). GROUP ALSO WELCOMED THEME "THE ENVIRONMENT", THOUGH NOTING THAT THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY RESTRICT CONSIDERATION TO WHAT IS NORMALLY CALLED "ENVIRONMENTAL ART".

6. COMMITTEE AUTHORIZED ITS CHAIRMAN TO HIRE TEMPORARY STAFF TO DEVELOP EXHIBIT AND SEEK FUNDING, SHOULD REQUESTED ASSURANCE BE RECEIVED FROM BIENNALE. SHORT DEADLINE ON THIS ASSURANCE WAS FELT NECESSARY BECAUSE COMMENCEMENT OF ACTION ON EXHIBIT IS ALREADY LONG OVERDUE. COMMITTEE ALSO LAMENTED FAMILIAR SITUATION OF DEALING WITH MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION ON CRASH BASIS, BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT EXISTENCE OF COMMITTEE WOULD PERMIT LONGER-RANGE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

7. MR. SCHNEIDMAN NOTED THAT IF REQUESTED ASSURANCE IS RECEIVED FROM BIENNALE, AND IF SHOW COULD TOUR ELSEWHERE AFTER VENICE, USIA COULD VERY LIKELY MAKE SIGNIFICANT UNCLASSIFIED

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CONTRIBUTION TO COSTS. THUS USIS ITALY WOULD HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE FROM GOE TO OVERALL USIA CONTRIBUTION AS WOULD OTHER EUROPEAN POSTS. KISSINGER

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